

THE HIGH-SCHOOL LIBRARY AND THE TEACHER-LIBRARIAN MOVEMENT

At last the high-school library is in a fair way to come into its own! It should be and promises rapidly to become one of the most important features of modern secondary education. Adequate high-school library service is the logical outgrowth of the attempt to broaden the outlook and the interests of the high-school student by teaching him to go beyond a single text-book for his information and inspiration. A well-organized library in charge of a wide-awake trained librarian does for all the students in all the courses what a first-class laboratory does in the sciences. It helps to teach them to get all the facts on a given proposition, to form careful conclusions.

The importance of teaching students to extend their search for facts is obvious when one stops to think that every school course deals with a body of facts that is constantly growing and changing. In some cases the change or growth is slow. In others, *e. g.*, all the industries and agriculture, the change is so rapid as to leave the average text-book out of date before it is published. Even the text-books in the social sciences are now supplemented in the best schools by constant use of current magazines.

Excellent work has been done in individual high-school libraries for years. But the first big step in the improvement of high-school libraries generally came in March, 1917, when at the St. Louis meeting of the North Central Association of

Colleges and Secondary Schools, the Commission on Unit Courses and Curricula defined the expression "adequate library facilities," a phrase long used without definite meaning in requirements for accredited secondary schools. "Adequate library facilities" was defined as meaning; (1) appropriate housing and equipment of the high-school library; (2) professionally trained librarians, (3) scientific selection and care of books, and the proper classification and cataloging of books and other printed matter; (4) instruction in the use of books and libraries as a unit course in high-school curricula; (5) adequate appropriations for salaries and for maintenance, the purchase of books, periodicals and other materials; (6) a trained librarian as state supervisor of school libraries either through the State Department of Education or the State Library Commission.

The second big step came in March, 1918, when at the Chicago meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools the Certain report, "Standard library organization and equipment for secondary schools" was adopted. The report has also been adopted by the Department of Secondary Education of the National Education Association and by the Committee on Education of the American Library Association. This report was prepared by Mr. C. C. Certain, head of the department of English of the Cass Technical high school of Detroit and his com-

mittee. It sets up definite standards for junior high schools; for high schools with an enrollment below 200; for high schools with an enrollment from 200 to 500; for four-year high schools or senior high schools with enrollment between 500 and 1,000; and for four-year high schools with enrollment between 1,000 and 3,000. It is complete enough to enable any high-school administrator to check up his school and to determine just where it stands.

No library can succeed without a capable librarian. It is interesting, therefore, to note that for all high schools of over 200 enrollment a full-time librarian is indicated. For all high schools with a smaller enrollment a "teacher-librarian" is specified. A "teacher-librarian" is a high-school teacher who is relieved of a part of her teaching duties and placed in charge of the library. This provision for "teacher-librarians" is most important. Smaller high schools are more numerous than larger ones. They are usually in smaller localities where there are fewer interests and possibly no book stores. They are in charge of teachers less experienced and less well trained and, therefore, less able to do without the help that a good library affords.

The standards having been set up, the third big step in the development of high-school libraries generally is an administrative one. It is suggested in the report: (1) that a committee be organized in every state to make a survey of library conditions in high schools; (2) that representatives of the state educational department and of the state library commission should be members of the surveying committee; (3) that to begin the work of standardizing libraries, actual conditions should be studied in relation to the standards given in this report; (4) that a statement of library conditions should be contained in

the reports of high-school inspectors; (5) that based upon this survey, a schedule of systematic library development should be outlined, with definite goals to be attained, until all standards have been achieved. It is estimated that not more than five years should be required for the complete achievement of standards as given.

There are already evidences of progress that promise rapid improvement of high-school libraries generally. A California law now reads:

No librarian shall be employed for more than two hours a day in any high school unless such librarian holds a high-school certificate or a special teacher's certificate in library craft, technique and use, of secondary grade work, gained in accordance with the provisions of this code. Such librarians shall rank as teachers and shall be subject to the burdens and entitled to the benefits of the public school teachers' retirement fund, on the same basis as active teachers. (Statutes 1917, p. 1317.)

In Oregon the State Education Department has recommended to superintendents that in any high school employing as many as 10 teachers, nine of them be used on the regular teaching force and that the tenth teacher be a trained librarian who may give her whole time to library work and thus serve the other nine. State Superintendent Churchill predicts that inside of 10 years there will not be a high school of that size in the Northwest which does not employ a librarian trained in one of our standard library schools.

For far-reaching results the action taken in Wisconsin is perhaps the most significant. The Wisconsin State Department of Education has put into effect, beginning with the current school year, requirements for librarians and "teacher-librarians" approaching the standards set up in the Certain report. The Wisconsin Library School, 5 colleges and 5 normal schools are undertaking to train teachers to meet the requirements. Three summer-school

courses are announced. The Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin is offering a course for "teacher-librarians" in which over 200 high-school teachers have been enrolled. It is estimated that because of the drift out of the teaching profession, 100 or more new "teacher-librarians" will be needed in Wisconsin each year. However, the knowledge of books and of ways of using them gained from the course is so valuable that many teachers take it who do not expect to become "teacher-librarians." The Milwaukee normal school requires all of its students who are preparing to teach in high schools to take this minimum of library training.

The training of the "teacher-librarian" should include: (1) a thorough study of the history of education and of psychology; a study of school administrative problems such as might be included in a course based on Arthur Perry's "Management of a city school," and an appreciation of the social background of education such as is contained in Irving King's "Social aspects of education"; (2) study of printed school courses, syllabi and manuals with definite consideration of the library materials that they suggest or require; (3) a thorough mastery of school reference books; (4) a study of the principles of book selection and purchase and familiarity with the aids used, including actual examination of the books commonly needed in school libraries; (5) simple courses in classifying and cataloging and vertical filing; (6) consideration of the problems of school library administration; (7) consideration of a simple course of instruction for school students in the use of books and libraries. This item is vital, for upon the teacher's ability to give such instruction will hinge her success in making the library a genuine educative force in the lives of

young people. In the maze of mechanical details the inspirational importance of the library is not to be overlooked.

The minimum course for the "teacher-librarian" should require the equivalent of the student's full time for 6 weeks in addition to the qualifications required of regular high-school teachers. A longer course is better. In any case the study should lead the student to see that the formal course is but the beginning of a training that is to be perfected by experience and continued by the study of library publications, which should be provided at the expense of the library.

The school library exists for the welfare of the school and finds its justification in the needs of the school. It must not be thought for a moment that it can take the place of an adequate public library or of the work such a library does with school children. On the other hand the development of school libraries will undoubtedly greatly increase the use of public libraries for it will give to thousands of students a knowledge of books and right habits of using them. The high school reaches students during a period in their growth when powerful life purposes are forming and when the desire for self improvement is strong. It is then that books as tools make the strongest appeal. A student of libraries after surveying two city systems states that in both cities it has been found possible to reach only a small fraction of the adult aliens, but that their children are almost without exception eager library patrons, not only throughout their too brief school course but also after they go to work.

Such a statement suggests the possibilities of the library as an agency for promoting good citizenship. Those possibilities will be fully realized only when the schools throughout the country train students to go beyond text-books for informa-

tion and inspiration and firmly fix in their minds a realization of the fact that school training is merely preparation for the larger training, in vocation and in citizenship, that is to continue throughout life

and that may profitably make much use of books, journals and library service.

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(Compliments of the Author)